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Mark Antony – *vir impius*?

The period of the declining years of the Republic belongs to the most interesting for scholars studying Roman history. The crisis of political-system institutions caused the republican system, developed for several centuries, to be on the decline. The escalation of internal struggles and social conflicts, rivalry between parties, political factions (*factiones*) or individual politicians resulted in the use of all available means of gaining political influence. At the same time, this was the period of changes and the formation of new political and social ideologies¹.

One of the manifestations of the foregoing tendencies was the increased importance of political propaganda, which became the main form of communication of the ruling circles with society, a way of shaping broad public opinion, influencing the voting at assemblies, communicating ideology, etc. The use of propaganda also enabled realization of the current goals of individuals or groups struggling for power².

The methods and content of propaganda had to be adjusted both to the level of awareness of the public and their intellectual capacities, and to social, political and economic conditions, or even to the techniques stimulating the ways of passing on information³. Various forms of political agitation were used for the purpose. The dominant role was still played by speeches delivered at assemblies, in the Senate and in courts. Their objective was not only to present arguments but also to discredit opponents⁴.

Among the persons who – during the period in question – exerted a significant impact both in the sphere of theory: philosophy, religion, political thought, etc. and in public life was, without doubt, Marcus Tullius Cicero⁵. An

¹ For the discussion of the state of research on different aspects of the decline of the Roman Republic in contemporary historiography see Bruhns, David, Nippel 1997.

² Flaig 1995, 77–127; Döbler 1999, 181 et seq.

³ Jacob 2005, 51 et seq.

⁴ Hölkeskamp 1995, 11–49; Pina Polo 1996.

⁵ Out of the ample literature on Cicero. see inter alia Fuhrmann 1990; Habicht 1990; Everitt 2001.

excellent orator and politician, he was a master of political propaganda. His aim was not only to persuade his audience into accepting his arguments but also to present his opponents in the worst light possible at the same time⁶. He utilized the contrast: his adherents were *virī boni*, acting in the best interests of the republic and society while the opponents were the people whose intention was to act to the detriment of the state⁷.

At the same time, he tried to use all the available propaganda means, including religious factors⁸. The dominant view among scholars is that during the period in question religion was a part of public life dominated by politics, hence, it was subordinated to political goals in the sphere of propaganda. All use of religious factors would be a means aimed at facilitating the reception of political content by the wide public – the means used to derive political gains in internal conflicts⁹.

One of the most characteristic examples of the use of religious symbols in Cicero's political propaganda was the appearance of large-scale reference to civic virtues (*virtutes*)¹⁰. For the orator, *virtutes* were the traits that should characterize a good citizen (*vir bonus, vir perfectus*). They comprised, inter alia: *aequitas, clementia, dignitas, fides, honestas, iustitia, auctoritas, amicitia, virtus, pietas*, etc.¹¹. Their opposites were the traits and activities of his political opponents described with the term *vir malus*¹². In the second speech *In Catilinam* he contrasts: *Ex hac enim parte pudor pugnat, illinc potulantia; hinc pudicitia, illinc stuprum; hinc fides, illinc fraudatio; hinc pietas, illinc scelus; hinc constantia, illinc furor; hinc honestas, illinc turpitudine; hinc continentia, illinc libido; hinc denique aequitas, temperantia, fortitudo, prudentia, virtutes omnes certant cum iniquitate, luxuria, ignavia, temeritate, cum vitiis omnibus; postremo copia cum egestate, bona ratio cum perdita, mens sana cum amentia, bona denique spes cum omnium rerum desperatione confligit*¹³.

Apart from irony, Cicero often introduced into his orations the term that would pejoratively describe his opponents and show their negative traits¹⁴. In his orations against Clodius he calls him, inter alia: *audax, belua, demens*,

⁶ Hammar 2013.

⁷ Cf. Weische 1966; Stroh 1975.

⁸ Heibges 1969, 833–849.

⁹ See. Beard et al. 1998, 134 et seq.: *As part of Roman public life, religion was (and always had been) a part of the political struggles and disagreements in the city.*

¹⁰ Kuklica 1975/76, 3–23.

¹¹ Achard 1973, 207–221; Korpanty 1976, 69 et seq.

¹² The comparison: *vir bonus – vir malus*: Cascione 2013, 115–138.

¹³ Cic., *In Cat.*, II, 25.

¹⁴ Corbeil 2002, 197–217; Cf. Booth 2007.

furiosus, improbus, latro, pestis, perditus, while Clodius's followers are called: *scelerati, furiosi, audaces, nefarii*¹⁵.

One such form of the opposites referring to religious elements is the juxtaposition of the terms: *pietas – impietas*. The term *pietas* is usually translated as piety¹⁶. In his treatise *De natura deorum* Cicero defines it as: *Est enim pietas iustitia adversum deos*¹⁷. Of a somewhat different meaning but also of a partly sacral character was obedience, observance of dictates and reverence within the family, e.g. children's reverence for parents (*pietas erga parentes*), parents towards children (*pietas erga liberos*), veneration of ancestors (*pietas erga maiores*)¹⁸. A special religious and political form was obedience to and veneration of the state (fatherland): *pietas erga patriam*¹⁹.

In his writings and speeches Cicero often referred to *pietas*. It symbolized the people who had the virtues that were of a divine character and, consequently, ensured them an exceptional position. Most often these were *virtus* and *iustitia*²⁰. An equivalent of *pietas* was the nickname *Pius*²¹. In the period in question the best known figure was Quintus Caecilius Metellus Pius, *pontifex maximus* between 81 and 63 BCE²². The nickname *Pius* was also borne by Sextus Pompey (Pompeius), son of Pompey the Great, and by Lucius Antonius, brother of triumvir Mark Antony. This is also evidenced by coins with the image of *Pietas*: on the Sextus Pompey coin there is the standing figure of the goddess with an olive branch in the right hand and a scepter in the left²³.

A form of the opposite of *pietas* was the term *impietas*. According to Cicero, the orator and philosopher, in the religious sphere *impius* equals *adversus deos immortales*. The equivalents of *impietas* are *scelus* and *nefas* – violations of divine laws. Like *pietas*, *impietas* can be applied to gods, fatherland, ancestors, parents, etc.²⁴.

¹⁵ Cf. Pina Polo 1991, 144 et seq. (Appendix: El vocabulario de la invective Ciceroniana contra Clodio).

¹⁶ Greek: *eusebeia*.

¹⁷ Cic., *De nat. deor.*, I, 116. Cf. Cic., *Top.*, 90; *De off.*, II, 11. For more see. Fugier 1963, 331 et seq.

¹⁸ Liegle 1983, 229–273; Waagenvoort 1980, 1–20; Champeaux 1989, 263–279.

¹⁹ Berdowski 2014, 143 et seq.

²⁰ Cf. Emilie 1943–44, 536–542.

²¹ Ulrich 1930.

²² Szemler 1972, 129.

²³ Crawford RRC, T.I, 486, no. 477/1–3; 524, no. 516/1–5. Cf. Kopij 2011, 203 et seq.

²⁴ Cicero, *De off.*, III, 28. Forcellini T.III, 1865, 401 – *Impietas: sceleratus inhumanusque affectus adversus Deum, patriam, parentes, cosve, qui parentum loco sunt: et generatim scelus, fraus, peccatum*; 402–403 – *Impius: proprie est sceleratus, saevus, ferus, nefarius, non pius*. Cf. Hellegouar'h 1963, 530 et seq.; Scheid 1985, 22 et seq.

In Cicero's political propaganda the terms: *impietas* and *impius* appear many times; one could even say that they were a part of the standard repertoire of pejorative words hurled at the opponents²⁵, who are described as: *impii homines, viri, and cives*. Sometimes, to strengthen their meaning, Cicero combines the terms with other corresponding words: *scelerati, nefarii, perditi, periuri*²⁶. These types of traits were attributed inter alia to: Verres, Catiline, Clodius, Gabinius, Piso, Vatinius and Antony²⁷.

He distinguishes several categories of *impietas*.

A. Denial of the existence of the gods (atheism).

B. Violation of religious rituals and ceremonies as well as sacred places and objects. Cicero names the basic forms of the category of *impietas*. They were:

a/ *neglegentia* – the term was used to refer to the negligence of rituals and sacrifices,

b/ *profanatio* – profanation of worship or a sacred place,

c/ *violatio* – the term denoted encroaching on or destruction of temples (*templa, aedes, fana, sacella*), places (groves – *luci*) or objects (e.g. altars – *arae*, statues – *simulacra*) regarded as holy,

d/ *sacrilegium* – the definition of the term *sacrilegium* (sacrilege) arouses many controversies in literature. According to jurists, this applied essentially to the theft (*furtum*) of things dedicated to the gods (*res sacrae*) or from a sacred place. The term *sacrilegium* had also another meaning, however. In the popular understanding it denoted “violation of sacredness”²⁸,

e/ *contra auspicia* – meant the non-observance of the signs sent by gods or violation of the principles of *divinatio*.

C. Introduction of new cults and deities and celebration of rites legally prohibited by the state.

D. Magic and sorcery. The term magic was used in ancient Rome in a double sense. In his treatise *De divinatione* Cicero regards as magic the elements of sooth-saying which are not a part of the official *divinatio*. Its goal was to learn the future fates of people, society, and the state. In the second sense the term comprised all kinds of secret practices and rites whose goal was

²⁵ For comparison of relevant references see Merguet 1961, Bd II, 242 et seq.; Merguet 1962, Bd II, 602 et seq.

²⁶ Cicero, *In Verr.*, II, 1,47; *Pro Sest.*, 9; *Pro Rege Deiot.*; 2; *Phil.*, XI, 16; XIII, 1; *Par. Stoic.*, IV,31; *De off.*, III,37 (*scelerati*); *In Verr.*, II, 1, 6; *Post red. ad sen.*, 18; *Phil.*, IV, 9; XI, 6; *De off.*, II,51 (*nefarii*); *De nat. deor.*, I, 63 (*periurii*).

²⁷ Hellegouar'h 1963, 530 et seq. Similarly, the term *religiosus* was used in political struggles. Cf. Sauer 1999, 187–196.

²⁸ Dębiński 1995, 163 et seq.

to influence the present or the future, to secure an advantage in some matter or to harm others²⁹.

The cases of *impietas* required taking special measures, both religious and political³⁰. Purification acts were performed by the pontifices. These consisted inter alia in *instauratio* – repetition of incorrect ceremonies, *lustratio* – a purifying procession, *piaculum* – propitiatory offerings, public prayers, holidays, games, etc.³¹.

A characteristic example of the use of charges of *impietas* in Cicero's propaganda are his speeches against Mark Antony – the Philippics. Cicero had already levied criticism against Antony, nevertheless, the criticism reached its height in 44–43 BCE and was connected with political activities of the then consul and Caesar's associate after the Ides of March³². The orator used the foregoing pattern by introducing the particular categories of *impietas* as accusations against Mark Antony.

The first kind of accusations were charges of “godlessness” and general *impietas*. In the Third Philippic Cicero compared Antony to the last Roman King Tarquin the Proud, the comparison being decidedly to the detriment of the consul. Cicero says that the ancestors could not bear Tarquin but he was called *cruel, not impious, but the Proud*³³. In contrast, he states: *shall Decimus Brutus endure the reign of the accursed and impious Antonius?*³⁴. Cicero not only uses the terms *sceleratus* and *impius* here, but further down his speech he tried to justify their use by listing the cases of Antony's violations of the rule of Roman religion, inter alia his negligence – as a consul and augur – of the auspices and auguries³⁵. He also challenged the legality of Antony's consulship, referring to his speech during the Feast of the Lupercal, when he tried to place a crown on Caesar's head, thereby abdicating his consulship and freedom³⁶. Later on in his oration, Cicero returns to the expressions connected with *impietas*, this time by comparing Antony with Octavian and Brutus *Nam si ille*

²⁹ For more on specific categories of *impietas* see Kowalski 2002, 103–123. Cf. Mommsen 1890, 389–402; Scheid 1981, 117–171.

³⁰ Scheid 1999, 331–347.

³¹ Scheid 1981, 121 et seq.; 152 et seq.

³² Frisch 1946, 119 et seq. On the activities of Marcus Antonius in 44–43 BCE see Matijević 2006.

³³ Cic., *Phil.*, III,4,9: *non crudelis, non impius, sed superbus est habitus et dictus.* (Engl. transl. by W. C. A. Ker – Loeb Cl. Libr.).

³⁴ Ibid, III,4,9: *D. Brutus sceleratum atque impium regnare patietur Antonium?*

³⁵ Ibid, III, 4,9–4,11.

³⁶ Ibid, III, 5, 12: *Nec vero M. Antonium consulem post Lupercalia debuistis putare; quo enim ille die, populo Romano inspectante, nudus, unctus, ebrius est contionatus et id egit, ut collegae diadema imponeret, eo die se non modo consulatu, sed etiam libertate abdicavit.*

*consul [...], sceleratus Caesar, Butus nefarius, qui contra consulem privato consilio exercitus comparaverunt*³⁷.

Similar terms were used in Cicero's earlier (Second) Philippic when discussing Antony's tribunate, especially the attempt to veto the Senate's resolution, which demanded that Caesar resign his office as governor of Gaul. He described his (Antony's) actions as *impie ac nefarie fecerit: ab huius enim scelere omnium malorum principium natum reperietis*³⁸.

Impious were also Antony's actions against Cicero. In the Second Philippic he recalls that Antony reminded him that he (Antony) gave up running for augurship in 53 BCE, owing to which Cicero was elected to this priests college. The orator describes this with the words: *O incredibilem audaciam! O impudentiam praedicandam*, arguing that Antony had no chances of being elected an augur at that time³⁹. He similarly treated Antony's accusation of ingratitude in connection with the events in Brundisium, when Antony permitted Cicero to return to Italy and protected him although he was an opponent of Caesar. Cicero says that it was not kindness but that Antony only refrained from a *nefarious crime*⁴⁰. In the Twelfth Philippic, Cicero, justifying his refusal to take part in the delegation to Antony, refers to the threat to his life from Mark Antony and his brother Lucius, whom he calls *teaterrima belua*⁴¹. Characteristic terms are used: "sacrilegious and impious hands" – *sacrilegas manus atque impias*.

Cicero compares Mark Antony with Marcus Lepidus, who exercised the post of the Pontifex Maximus after Julius Caesar's death. Antony described him as the *most pious man – homo piissimus*. Cicero says that Antony used the term *piissimus* that did not exist in Latin at that time. He added ironically that through his *divine piety – divinam pietatem* Antony not only introduced a new word but also, by identifying his alliance with Lepidus, a good citizen, he wanted the latter to be regarded as an *impious man*⁴².

³⁷ Ibid, III, 6,14.

³⁸ Ibid, II, 21, 50.

³⁹ Ibid, II, 2, 4. Linderski 1972, 181 et seq. dates Cicero's election at 52 BCE Cf. Kowalski 1995, 126 et seq.

⁴⁰ Cic., *Phil.*, II, 3, 5: *Quale autem beneficium est, quod te abstinueris nefario scelere?*

⁴¹ Ibid, XII, 11.26: *hic ira dementiaque inflammatus adhibito fratre Lucio, teaterrima belua, numquam profecto a me sacrilegas manus atque impias abstinebit*".

⁴² Ibid, XIII, 19, 43: *Nec Lepidi societatem violare, piissimi hominis, Tibi cum Lepido societas aut cum ullo, non dicam bono civi, sicut ille est, sed homine sano? Id agis, ut Lepidum aut impium aut insanum existimari velis. Nihil agis (quamquam adfirmare de altero difficile est), de Lepido praesertim, quem ego metuam numquam, bene sperabo, dum licebit. Revocare te a furore Lepidus voluit, non adiutor esse dementiae. Tu porro ne pios quidem, sed 'piissimos' quaeris et, quod verbum omnino nullum in lingua Latina est, id propter tuam divinam pietatem novum inducis.*

The general term *impietas* was applied to characterize not only Mark Antony but also his associates. To describe them, Cicero repeatedly uses pejorative words that suggest their *nefariousness and impiety*. The primary expression was *impii cives*⁴³. In order to strengthen the invective the orator also used other, similarly negative adjectives: *nefarii cives*⁴⁴, *sclerati cives*⁴⁵, *audaces*, *facinerosi*⁴⁶, with the result that Antony's adherents would be termed *latrones*: *Quis illum igitur consulem nisi latrones putant?*⁴⁷. Antony's character attributes caused only such people to become his followers. In the Second Philippic, Cicero says: *Tu ne verbo quidem violatus, ut audacior quam Catilina, furiosior quam Clodius viderere, ultro me maledictis lacessisti, tuamque a me alienationem commendationem tibi ad impios civis fore putavisti*⁴⁸. What is characteristic is the comparison of Antony with Cicero's previous enemies: *more audacious than Catiline, more frenzied than Clodius*.

Detailed charges concerned the violation of religious rituals. The first charge concerned the Lupercalia festival in 44 BCE during which Antony, as a member of the *Luperci* college, tried to put a crown on Caesar's head⁴⁹. Cicero characterized the course of the festival as follows: *Nec vero M. Antonium consulem post Lupercalia debuistis putare; quo enim ille die, populo Romano inspectante, nudus, unctus, ebrius est contionatus et id egit, ut collegae diadema imponeret, eo die se non modo consulatu, sed etiam libertate abdicavit*⁵⁰. Profanation covered not only the act of handing the crown but also the attitude of Antony himself, who spoke *naked, perfumed, and drunk*⁵¹.

⁴³ Ibid, II, 1, 1: *tuamque a me alienationem commendationem tibi ad impios civis fore putavisti*; III, 14, 36: *Sunt impii cives, sed pro caritate rei publicae nimium multi, contra multitudinem bene sentientium admodum pauci*; IV, 4, 9: *Quamquam ne ii quidem ipsi, quod locuntur, id sentiunt nec ab iudicio omnium mortalium, quamvis impii nefariiue sint*; XII, 3, 7: *Illa impios civis iudicavit, eiecit, exclusit. Illi, illi, inquam, urbi fortissime conanti e manibus est ereptus Antonius*; XII, 7, 15; XII, 7, 15: *si tot tam impii, tam audaces, tam facinerosi recepti sint*; XIII, 1, 1: *A principio huius belli, patres conscripti, quod cum impiis civibus consceleratisque suscepimus*.

⁴⁴ Ibid, IV, 4, 9: *Quamquam ne ii quidem ipsi, quod loquuntur, id sentiunt nec ab iudicio omnium mortalium, quamvis impii nefariiue sint, sicut sunt, dissentire possunt*; VII, 1, 3: *Utrum igitur in nefariis civibus uiscendi*.

⁴⁵ Ibid, XIII, 1, 1: *A principio huius belli, patres conscripti, quod cum impiis civibus consceleratisque suscepimus*.

⁴⁶ Ibid, XII, 7, 15: *Quamquam ne ii quidem ipsi, quod locuntur, id sentiunt nec ab iudicio omnium mortalium, quamvis impii nefariiue sint, sicut sunt, dissentire possunt*.

⁴⁷ Ibid, IV, 4, 9.

⁴⁸ Ibid, II, 1, 1.

⁴⁹ A detailed description of the event: Ibid, II, 34, 85–87. Cf. Ibid, XIII, 8, 17; 15, 31; 19, 41; Plut., *Caes.*, LXI, 2; *Ant.*, XII, 1–3; Suet., *Caes.*, LXXIX, 9; App., *BC* 2, 109; Dio Cass., XLIV, 11, 2; Vell. Pat., I, 56, 4.

⁵⁰ Ibid, III, 5, 12.

⁵¹ North 2008, 144–160.

However, to Cicero the most controversial were Antony's actions connected with the process of *deification* of Gaius Julius Caesar⁵². The propagandistic actions by Antonius and his followers, and then also by Octavian consisted in granting Caesar successive symbols and "divine" honors with the simultaneous reference to *pietas*⁵³. The beginnings of honoring Caesar and the creation of *pietas* towards him appear already at the funeral. According to Appian, Antony *gathered up his garments like one inspired, girded himself so that he might have the free use of his hands, took his position in front of the bier as in a play, bending down to it and rising again, and first hymned him as a celestial deity, raising his hands to heaven in order to testify to Caesar's divine birth*⁵⁴. Another honoring act towards Caesar was to set up a column with the words: *Parenti Patriae*⁵⁵. Suetonius writes: *Afterwards they set up in the Forum a solid column of Numidian marble almost twenty feet high, and inscribed upon it "To the Father of his Country". At the foot of this they continued for a long time to sacrifice, make vows, and settle some of their disputes by an oath in the name of Caesar*⁵⁶. A significant moment for the propaganda proclaiming Caesar's divinity were the events of 22 to 30 July, 44 BCE during *Ludi Victoriae Caesaris*. A comet appeared during that time, which was recognized as Caesar's soul taken to heaven⁵⁷.

A turning point, however, on the road to recognizing Caesar's divine nature were the Senate's resolutions of 1 September, 44 BCE. Cicero did not come to the Senate's session, whereas on 2 September he delivered his First Philippic, in which he spoke about the resolutions in question adopted on Antony's motion. Their main point was to honor Caesar by holding special *Parentalia* in his honor, and *supplicationes*⁵⁸. *Parentalia* in Caesar's honor probably had a character of a solemn state ceremony. As J. Scheid proved, *Parentalia* during the imperial period were a preliminary step towards deifying the deceased emperor; this probably also applied to Caesar⁵⁹.

⁵² Matijević 2006, 161 et seq.

⁵³ Cf. Cogrossi 1981, 142–160.

⁵⁴ App., *BC*, II, 146 (transl. H. White – Loeb Cl. Libr.).

⁵⁵ Cic., *Phil.*, I, 2, 5. App., *BC*, III, 2, 2. Cf. III, 3, 7.

⁵⁶ Suet., *Caes.*, 85: *Plebs [...] postea solidam columnam proce viginti pedem lapidis Numidii in foro statuit scripsitque: Parenti Patriae. Apud eam longo tempore sacrificare, vota suscipere, controversias quasdam interposito per Caesarem iure iurando distrahere perseveravit* (transl. J. C. Rolfe – Loeb Cl. Libr.). The column was destroyed by Dolabella after he crushed the movement led by Pseudo-Marius, and it was subsequently rebuilt together with Caesar's statue, on which an inscription was placed: *PARENTI OPTIME MERITO*. Cf. Cicero, *Ad Fam.*, XII, 3.1.

⁵⁷ Suet., *Caes.*, 88. Cf. Plut., *Caes.*, 69; Iul. *Obseq.*, 68.

⁵⁸ Cic., *Phil.*, I, 5, 12: *De supplicationibus referebatur, quo in genere senatores deesse non solent. Coguntur enim non pignoribus, sed eorum, de quorum honore agitur, gratia, quod idem fit, cum de triumpho refertur*. Cf. Ibid., I, 6, 13.

⁵⁹ Scheid 1993, 188–201.

A complete novelty in the Roman religious rites was the *supplicationes* passed by the Senate in honor of Caesar. In the abovementioned fragment of the Philippic Cicero says: *Anme censetis, patres conscripti, quod vos inviti secuti estis, decreturum fuisse, ut parentalia cum supplicationibus miscerentur, ut inexpiabiles religiones in rem publicam inducerentur, ut decernerentur supplicationes mortuo?*⁶⁰ It follows from Cicero's account that those were the rites during which prayers were not addressed to the gods but directly to Caesar. This would show that the Senate recognized Caesar's divinity in this case since it agreed to hold prayers and rituals addressed to him. Contemporary scholars emphasize the crucial importance of the abovementioned resolutions of the Senate for the process of deification of Julius Caesar because they practically meant the initiation of his divine cult⁶¹.

Cicero, who did not want to recognize this, called the rites *inexpiabiles religiones*, declaring: *adduci tamen non possem, ut quemquam mortuum coniungerem cum deorum immortalium religione, ut, cuius sepulcrum usquam extet, ubi parentetur, ei publice supplicetur*⁶². The orator warned that disasters and misfortunes might fall upon Rome: *Sed hoc ignoscant di immortales velim et populo Romano, qui id non probat, et huic ordini, qui decrevit invitus*⁶³.

Cicero also challenged other honors awarded to Caesar: the *pulvinar* – an adorned bed to which gods are entitled, the *fastigium* – the pointed roof in Caesar's house which resembled the finials of temples, a *simulacrum* – a statute in the temple, a separate priest – flamen, a gold chair in the curia and in the court, *tensa* – chariot and *ferculum* – a litter for carrying a statue during *ludi circenses*, etc.⁶⁴ On this occasion he attacked Antony, accusing him of acting as the priest (flamen) of the Divine Julius like the flamines of Jupiter, Mars and Quirinus. He called on him (Antony) to ordain himself as a flamen since he was an augur⁶⁵. A more serious charge, however, was that Antony profaned holidays and the accompanying games: *ludi Romani*. Antony allegedly passed a statute by which the fifth day devoted to Caesar would be added. Cicero accused him that he profaned prayers in this way to avoid profaning “the beds of the gods”

⁶⁰ Cic., *Phil.*, I, 6,13.

⁶¹ On the interpretation of the abovementioned Philippics by Cicero and on the significance of the presented resolutions of the Senate, see Ferrary 1999, 215–232.

⁶² Cic., *Phil.*, I,6,13.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid, II,43.110–111; Plut., *Caes.* 63; Suet., *Caes.*, 76; App., *BC*, II, 106. Cf. Beard, North, Price 1998, 140 et seq.

⁶⁵ Cic., *Phil.*, II,43.110: *Est ergo flamen, ut Iovi, ut Marti, ut Quirino, sic divo Iulio M. Antonius. Quid igitur cessas? Cur non inauguraris? Sume diem, vide, qui te inauguret; conlegae sumus; nemo negabit.*

– *pulvinaria*. He finished his argument with a call: *Aut undique religionem tolle aut usque quaque conserva*⁶⁶.

A case of *impietas*, consisting in the *violatio* of the temple, were, according to Cicero, the actions of Antony on 1 September 44 BCE. He mentions that Antony closed the Temple of Concord (Concordia), surrounded it with armed soldiers, a part of whom, composed of the worst criminals (*armatos, latrones, sicarios*), he led inside, whereas he positioned the barbarians on the Forum – Iturian archers. As a result of the action, Cicero claims, the temple was transformed into a prison⁶⁷. Antony did something similar on 19 September 44 BCE when came to the Temple of Concord with a detachment of armed soldiers and delivered a speech against Cicero⁶⁸.

An “impious” deed was also, Cicero insisted, the fact of purchasing Gnaeus Pompey’s house by Antony. According to the orator, Antony thereby fell foul not only of Pompey’s Penates but also of the gods⁶⁹. Cicero also regarded as a violation of religious regulations Antony’s purchase of the estate of Marcus Terentius Varro (*sanctissimi atque integerrimi viri*) in Casinum⁷⁰.

Cicero leveled most of religious objections against Antony’s activity as an augur. As mentioned above, Antony reminded Cicero that in 53 BCE he (Antony) gave up his seat in the college of augurs by withdrawing his candidacy. Antony entered the elections for augur in 50 BCE, after the death of a member of this college Quintus Hortensius. His rival was L. Domitius Ahenobarbus, consul of 54 BCE, supported by the conservatives. Antonius was supported by his colleague in the tribunate G. Curio, and by Julius Caesar although in absentia. The elections were held with the use of violence and corruption, and Antony won them⁷¹.

Cicero accused Antony of disregarding auspices, which he was obliged to obey, acting in a double capacity: as consul and as augur⁷². The most controversial were Antony’s actions, who opposed the election of Cornelius Dolabella as

⁶⁶ Ibid, II, 43.110.

⁶⁷ Ibid, V, 7, 18: *Illud vero taeterrimum non modo aspectu, sed etiam auditu, in cella Concordiae conlocari armatos, latrones, sicarios, de templo carcerem fieri, opertis valvis Concordiae, cum inter subsellia senatus versarentur latrones, patres conscriptos sententias dicere*. Cf. Ibid, II, 44, 112.

⁶⁸ Ibid, V, 7, 20.

⁶⁹ Ibid, II, 26, 64–27,68.

⁷⁰ Ibid, II, 40, 103: *Ab hac perturbatione religionum advolas in M. Varronis, sanctissimi atque integerrimi viri, fundum Casinatem, quo iure, quo ore?*.

⁷¹ Antonius was also backed up by M. Caelius Rufus: Cic., *Ad Fam.*, VIII, 14, 1. Cf. Cic., *Phil.* II, 2, 4. For more: Linderski 1966, 155.

⁷² Cic., *Phil.*, III, 4, 9: *Servabant auspicia reges; quae hic consul augurque neglexit, neque solum legibus contra auspicia ferendis, sed etiam conlega una ferente eo, quem ipse ementitis auspiciis vitiosum fecerat*.

consul in 44 BCE. Cicero gave a detailed account of the events. On 1 January, Caesar announced in the Senate that because he was planning to leave for war, he would put forward Dolabella's candidacy as consul. Then Antony warned that in accordance with his official powers (as consul and augur) he would try to prevent this choice by means of omens⁷³. Already the fact of announcing auspices long before the comitias was a violation of them, Cicero maintained. The continuation took place during the election assembly. When it turned out that most centurias voted for the election of Dolabella, Antony as augur said the formula *alio die*, denoting the announcement (*nuntiatio*) of unfavorable auguries and a motion to discontinue the assembly and repeat the elections at another date⁷⁴. The problem of the reliability of Cicero's accounts became the subject of discussion on the use of augural law and the rules of *obnuntiatio* in ancient Rome. There is no doubt that Cicero's account is highly tendentious. The orator not only challenged Antony's use of the rules of observing the sky and reporting unfavorable signs, but he also questioned his general competence as augur. An additional factor that strengthened Cicero's subjective approach was the fact that Dolabella was his son-in-law. In formal terms, Antony as an augur had the right to say the foregoing formula and to discontinue the assembly as consul⁷⁵. According to Plutarch's account, Gnaeus Pompey behaved in a similar way when he presided over the election of praetors in 55 BCE. When the *centuria praerogativa* voted for the election of M. Portius Cato, Pompey, as an augur, announced (*nuntiatio*) that he heard a thunderclap, and then, as consul, he discontinued the assembly⁷⁶.

Interestingly enough, Caesar, according to Cicero, was to have referred during the Senate's session on the Ides of March of 44 BCE to the abovementioned election of Dolabella and to Antony's auguries. Cicero stressed that Antony was afraid that he (Cicero) would speak as a member of the college of augurs and might accuse him of having falsified the auspices⁷⁷.

A different position was taken by Antony during the election of censors in 44 BCE, in which his paternal uncle was to run. Cicero says that the tribune of the people reported a thunderbolt on the left, which was a bad omen. Antony as consul cancelled the electoral comitias then. Cicero commented on this spitefully *Cum tua quid interest, nulla auspicia sunt, cum tuorum, tum fis religiosus*⁷⁸.

⁷³ Ibid, II, 32, 80–81.

⁷⁴ Ibid, II, 33, 82–84.

⁷⁵ Cf. Linderski 1966, 99 et seq.

⁷⁶ Plut., *Pomp.*, 52; *Cat. Min.*, 42. Cf. Kowalski 1995, 139.

⁷⁷ Cic., *Phil.*, II, 35, 88.

⁷⁸ Ibid, II, 38, 98–99.

Cicero's next charge against Antony's actions *contra auspicia* was the fact of passage of legislation in 44 BCE contrary to the reported omens. In 44 BCE, Mark Antony, in Cicero's account, pushed through at the assembly the *lex Antonia agraria*: among storm, thunder, and lightning. According to the rule of *Iove tonante, fulgurante, comitia nefas*, the consul should have discontinued the assembly. The orator also scoffed at Antony that as an augur he could not interpret unfavorable signs without the help of his colleagues, and furthermore, that he proposed the law with a colleague whose election he declared inconsistent with the auguries⁷⁹. An additional, negative factor that impacted the assembly was the use of violence. Antony's conduct inconsistent with *ius augurale* did not, however, stem from his ignorance but from political reasons.

Another law passed *per vim contra auspicia* was *lex Antonia iudiciaria*. Cicero mentions that it was passed during the heaviest rain and storm with an accompanying whirlwind and downpour, among thunder and lightning⁸⁰. Antony's legislation was cancelled in 43 BCE by the Senate through the formula *leges per vim contra auspicia latae*. Cicero says: *Leges statuimus per vim et contra auspicia latas iisque nec populum nec plebem teneri*⁸¹.

The auspices were also disregarded when establishing a colony in Casilinum. Cicero mentions that contrary to his earlier advice and the rules that a new colony must not be established at the site of the existing one – established in accordance with the auspices. Antony set up a colony where Caesar had established it, having held new auspices⁸².

The most serious charge against Antony was starting a civil war. In the sources it is explicitly described as: *bellum impium, scelerum, nefandum*. The justification for the expressions is given by Cicero. In the work *De officiis*, written in 44 BCE, he writes: *Secutus est qui in causa impia, Victoria etiam foedior non singulorum civium bona publicaret, sed universas provincias regionesque uno calamitatis iure comprehenderet*⁸³. Similarly, in the Second Philippic: *Atque idem ego, cum iam opes omnis et suas et populi Romani Pompeius ad Caesarem detulisset seroque ea sentire coepisset, quae multo ante provideram, inferrique patriae bellum viderem nefarium, pacis, concordiae, compositionis auctor esse non destiti, meaque illa vox est nota multis:*

⁷⁹ Ibid, V, 7–10.

⁸⁰ Ibid, V, 6, 15: *En causam, cur lex tam egregia tamque praeclara maximo imbri, tempestate, ventis, procellis, turbinibus, inter fulmina et tonitrua ferretur.*

⁸¹ Ibid, XII, 5, 12. Cf. XIII, 3, 5; For more: Kowalski 2007, 103 et seq.

⁸² Ibid, II, 40, 102.

⁸³ Cic., *De off.*, II, 27.

*'Utinam, Pompei, cum Caesare societatem aut numquam coisses aut numquam diremisses! Fuit alterum gravitatis, alterum prudentiae tuae'*⁸⁴.

A somewhat different interpretation of the causes of civil wars fought in I. c. BCE was offered over a century later by the poet Lucan: in his poem *Farsalia* he regarded the gods as the driving force behind civil wars, proscriptions, and sacrifices suffered by innocent people. According to him, it was the evidence for cruelty and injustice of the gods⁸⁵. Also in Tacitus, the causes of civil wars are described as: *causa scelera*⁸⁶. Among the nobility (*nobilitas*) the dominant views were that a civil war could not be the grounds for holding *supplicationes*, *ovatio* and a triumph because it was disliked by the gods⁸⁷. Cicero also emphasized that none of the commanders during the previous civil wars – neither Sulla, nor Octavius or Cinna sought to be awarded *supplicationes*⁸⁸.

Cicero repeatedly stressed that the war waged by Antony was: *impia, nefaria, scelera*⁸⁹. This stemmed from several reasons. The most important was the reference to Antony as *impius bellator*. This formula was repeatedly applied to commanders who violated religious rules: Appius Claudius; Quintus Pleminius, Gaius Flaminius, and Hannibal. Defeat was the punishment they suffered for this. In the period in question, a classic example was M. Licinius Crassus, referred to as an *impius bellator*: for disregarding omens and auguries before going to war against the Partians.⁹⁰

A similar offence was also committed by Mark Antony, who left Rome at night without holding the prescribed auspices, prayers and offerings *Antonius contra populum Romanum exercitum adducebat tum, cum a legionibus relictus nomen Caesaris exercitumque pertimuit neglectisque sacrificiis sollemnibus ante lucem vota ea, quae numquam solveret, nuncupavit, et hoc tempore in provinciam populi Romani conatur invadere*⁹¹.

Another reason was the composition of Antony's army. Cicero characterizes it as follows: *Neque enim quiescit; habet legionem, habet fugitivos, habet sceleratam impiorum manum; est ipse confidens, impotens, gladiatorio generi mortis addictus*⁹².

⁸⁴ Cic., *Phil.*, II, 10,24; *Ibid.*, VIII, 2–10; *Pro Marc.*, 17–18; 29–31.

⁸⁵ Luc., *Phars.*, VII, 447–448; I, 21; I,135 (*bellum nefandum*). Cf. Jal, 1962, 181–188.

⁸⁶ Tac., *Hist.*, II,6,4.

⁸⁷ Jal, 1962, 170–200; Morawiecki 2014, 37 et seq.

⁸⁸ Cic., *Phil.*, XIV, 22–24.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, VIII, 1, 2–3,10; III, 1,3; IV, 12; 2,4; 4,10; VI, 1,2.

⁹⁰ Plut., *Cras.*, 16. Cf. Meulder 1995, 123 et seq.

⁹¹ Cic, *Phil.*, III, 4, 11. Cf. V, 9, 24: *Post autem neque sacrificiis sollemnibus factis neque votis nuncupatis non profectus est, sed profugit paludatus.*

⁹² *Ibid.*, XI, 7, 16. Cf. XI, 14, 37.

Antony's war was presented as aimed not only against his adversaries but also against the Roman state and against gods. The impiety of Antony's men caused the gods to be against him, thus giving the defenders of the Republic the strength and means to fight against him in order to regain freedom⁹³.

The orator contrasts him with Octavian, whose deeds were recognized by the Senate on Cicero's motion, describing them as divine and immortal⁹⁴. Extolling Octavian's achievements, Cicero submitted a motion that Antony be declared an *enemy of Rome*⁹⁵. This became a precedent, the orator invoking the case of Catiline, who was declared *hostis* and *impius bellator*⁹⁶. In 43 BCE, Cicero motioned for a resolution to hold 50-day *supplicationes* to celebrate Decimus Brutus's victory over Antony at Mutina. Appian emphasizes the exceptional character of these rites "which the Romans had never decided to hold either during the wars with the Gauls or during any other"⁹⁷. Cicero himself, when accused of celebrating the *civil war* in a religious way, answered in the Fourteenth Philippic by showing the analysis of other *supplicationes* linked with wars in the mid-I. c. BCE, including Caesar's rites⁹⁸. When justifying his motion, he requested that Antony be regarded as *public enemy*, owing to which the people and the Senate would win the acceptance and favor with the gods⁹⁹.

The abovementioned military success did not end the struggle against Antony. Cicero therefore invoked divine intervention. In the Fourth Philippic he says: *Sive enim prodigiis atque portentis di immortales nobis futura praedicunt, ita sunt aperte pronuntiata, ut et illi poena et nobis libertas adpropinquet*¹⁰⁰. By sending signs from the heavens, the gods promised a punishment for Antony and freedom to the defenders of the Republic.

Cicero also stresses the kind of provided-for punishments. In the treaty *De legibus* he refers to Plato, according to whom good men receive a reward after death, and the impious ones – punishment¹⁰¹. In the Philippic he says the *impii*

⁹³ Ibid, III, 14, 36: *Sunt impii cives, sed pro caritate rei publicae nimium multi, contra multitudinem bene sentientium admodum pauci; quorum opprimendorum di immortales incredibilem rei publicae potestatem et fortunam dederunt.*

⁹⁴ Ibid, I, 2, 4: *Cuius de laudibus et honoribus, qui ei pro divinis et immortalibus meritis divini immortalesque debentur, mihi senatus adsensus paulo ante decrevit ut primo quoque tempore referretur.*

⁹⁵ Ibid, IV, 1, 2; 2, 4.

⁹⁶ Meulder 2010, 129 et seq.

⁹⁷ App., *BC*, III, 74, 302.

⁹⁸ Cic., *Phil.*, XIV, 1.1–8,23.

⁹⁹ Ibid, 2, 6–3,7.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, IV, 4, 10.

¹⁰¹ Cic., *De leg.*, II, 27, 68: *Deinceps dicit eadem illa de immortalitate animorum et reliqua post mortem tranquillitate bonorum, poenis impiorum.* Cf. Cic., *De leg. agr.*, II, 92: *omnis acerbissimas impiorum poenas pertulerunt.*

(towards the fatherland) will receive punishment after death: one prescribed for *parricidii*¹⁰². In the oration *In Pisonem* he states that such are the punishments for the impious and great criminals *homines consceleratos impulsu deorum terreri furialibus taedis ardentibus; sua quemque fraus, suum facinus, suum scelus, sua audacia de sanitate ac mente deturbat; hae sunt impiorum furiae, hae flammae, hae faces*¹⁰³.

To sum up the foregoing discussion, it should be stressed that in Rome, during the decline of the Republic, charges of *impietas* were part of the canon of political struggle. After Caesar's death, such charges were invoked both by the republicans who accused Caesar, and by Mark Antony speaking against the murderers of Caesar. However, religious aspects cannot be separated from political ones because these categories were closely connected. Some of the accusations may have been exaggerated; on the other hand, it was the period of transformations in the morals and religion, which was accompanied among the elites by some skepticism and a search for religious innovations. Indisputably, the use of the foregoing canon was aimed at enhancing propaganda elements, especially in the lower classes, at which politicians and orators excelled, in particular Marcus Tullius Cicero.

Streszczenie

Marek Antoniusz – *vir impius*?

W okresie schyłku republiki jednym z elementów walki politycznej były mowy wygłaszane na zgromadzeniach, w senacie i w sądach. Do najbardziej charakterystycznych przejawów wykorzystania symboliki religijnej w propagandzie politycznej Cyncerona należy pojawienie się w znaczącej skali odniesień do cnót obywatelskich (*virtutes*), stanowiących cechy, którymi powinien charakteryzować się dobry obywatel (*vir bonus, vir perfectus*). Ich przeciwstawieniem były cechy i działalność jego przeciwników politycznych określanych terminem *vir malus*. Do stałego repertuaru pejoratywnych określeń przeciwników Cyncerona należały terminy: *impietas* i *impius*. Są oni określani jako: *impii homines, viri, cives*. Czasem dla wzmocnienia ich znaczenia mówca łączy je z innymi odpowiednikami: *scelerati, nefarii, perditii, periuri*.

Charakterystycznym przykładem wykorzystania oskarżeń o *impietas* w propagandzie Cyncerona są mowy przeciwko Markowi Antoniuszowi –

¹⁰² Cic., *Phil.*, XIV, 32: *illi igitur impii, quos cecidistis, etiam ad inferos poenas parricidii luent.*

¹⁰³ Cic., *In Pis.*, 20, 46.

Filipiki. Mówca zastosował w nich stały schemat, wprowadzając poszczególne kategorie *impietas* jako zarzuty przeciwko Antoniuszowi. Pierwszym rodzajem oskarżeń były zarzuty o *bezbożność* i ogólną *impietas*. Charakteryzowała ona nie tylko Marka Antoniusza, ale również jego współpracowników. Ciceron wielokrotnie używa na ich określenie pejoratywnych terminów, mających wskazywać na ich *zbrodniczość* i *bezbożność*, *impīi cives*, *nefarii cives*, *scelerati cives*, *audaces*, *facinerosi*.

Szczegółowe zarzuty dotyczyły naruszenia obrzędów religijnych: między innymi świąt Luperkaliów w 44 roku p.n.e., w trakcie których Antoniusz jako członek kolegium *Luperci* próbował nałożyć Cezarowi koronę; oraz działań Antoniusza związanych z procesem *ubóstwienia* Gajusza Juliusza Cezara, a zwłaszcza uchwał senatu z 1 września 44 roku p.n.e., których głównym punktem było uczczenie Cezara poprzez zorganizowanie specjalnych *Parentalia* oraz *supplicationes*. Za przejaw *impietas*, polegający na *violatio* świątyni, uznał Ciceron działania Antoniusza w dniu 1 września 44 roku, kiedy to Antoniusz zamknął świątynię Zgody (*Concordia*) i otoczył ją zbrojnymi.

Najwięcej zastrzeżeń religijnych miał Ciceron wobec działalności Antoniusza jako augura. Dotyczyło to zastosowania *obnuntiatio* oraz *nuntiatio* podczas wyborów Dolabelli na konsula w 44 roku p.n.e. Kolejnym zarzutem Cicerona przeciwko działaniom Antoniusza *contra auspicia* było przeprowadzenie ustawodawstwa w 44 roku p.n.e. wbrew zgłaszanym wróżbom. Ustawodawstwo Antoniusza zostało w 43 roku p.n.e. skasowane przez senat poprzez zastosowanie formuły: *leges per vim contra auspicia latae*.

Najpoważniejszym zarzutem wobec Antoniusza było podjęcie wojny domowej, określanej w źródłach: *bellum impium*, *scelerum*, *nefandum*. Został on uznany jako *hostis* i *impius bellator*. Konsekwencją tych oskarżeń miały być kary zesłane przez bogów. Ciceron stwierdza, że *impīi* (w odniesieniu do ojczyzny) otrzymają po śmierci karę, wyznaczoną dla *parricidii*.